

MIDDLETOWN, PA – The Eagle Scout rank, not often attained, represents strength of character and knowledge and the most prestigious rank that a Boy Scout can earn. Kyle O'Brien and Sean Finsterbusch of Troop 85 in Middletown celebrated this special achievement at the Middletown Presbyterian Church. They were congratulated and presented awards by fellow scouts, troop leaders, and Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) at a troop ceremony.

"The rank of Eagle Scout is a tremendous achievement that recognizes that young men, such as Kyle and Sean, both understand and respect their community and nation," said the Congressman. "They have made a public commitment to serve their community with honor, and I thank them for that. They have set an example to the young people in their community and in their troop for which they can be proud. I would also like to applaud their parents and congratulate them on raising outstanding young men."

Congressman Sestak recalled a story from President Clinton's White House, in which he served, when a group of historians and men who fought the battle at Normandy visited the President before he spoke at the Normandy cemetery for the 50th anniversary of D-Day. During his opportunity to speak, one historian made particularly moving remarks about the young men who fought in that brutal battle. Members of the German Army, believing a military could not function without its leaders, targeted the American officers. Even without their commanders and despite severe casualties, the remaining troops rose from the beaches of Normandy and seized the bluffs. The historian spoke of a special "it," a unique characteristic that Americans have instilled in their youth for generations that allows them to accomplish extraordinary results such as what those soldiers did on June 6, 1944.

"And then he turned to the President and said, 'Whatever that "it" is, that "it" is what makes America great,'" said Congressman Sestak. "I have never forgotten that story. It is that exceptional quality that families such as the Finsterbusches and the O'Briens and communities such as Middletown produce in their youth. As a result, we are fortunate as a nation to have so many young men and women like them who have a passion for service. I thank them for their past and future work on behalf of our community and our country."

For his Eagle Scout Project, Kyle constructed replacement picnic tables at the Lenni Park in Middletown, replacing old tables with some that were handicap accessible. Sean worked with

Congressman Sestak's office on the Veteran's History Project, recording stories of wartime Veterans for the Library of Congress.

According to the Boy Scouts of America, the fact that a boy is an Eagle Scout has always carried with it a special significance, not only in Scouting but also as he enters higher education, business or industry, and community service. The award is a performance-based achievement whose standards have been well-maintained over the years. Only about 5 percent of all boys who join Boy Scout troops earn the Eagle Scout rank. Approximately 1.7 million Boy Scouts have earned the rank since 1912. The goals of Scouting—citizenship training, character development, and personal fitness—remain important for all Scouts, whether or not they attain the Eagle Scout rank.

*Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.*

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